

further reduced by the use of stub axles to reduce drag, wheel and track wear, and dead weight, and by the improvement of weight distribution. Maintenance downtime costs will be reduced and performance enhanced by the continuous monitoring of the bearing and brake system. Impending problems will be detected and resolved prior to major breakdowns and train delays.

The Iron Highway train is approximately 1,400 feet in length. The load carrying-platforms are joined by articulated joints which are approximately 30 inches above the top of rail and therefore are out of compliance with standard coupler height. These joints will be separated only for maintenance requirements. Thus, there is no need for conventional uncoupling levers nor for end-sill handholds. The trailers will be "circus" loaded and locked in place automatically from the cab of the hostler tractor. There is no need for side handholds and sill steps.

The rear of the special adapter platform will be joined to the load-carrying platforms by an articulated joint. At the front, where the platform is coupled to the locomotive by a conventional type coupler, the platform will include standard safety appliances, such as end sill handholds and side handholds which are extended above the deck and side sill steps.

The split-ramp is located at the center of the Iron Highway train and will include side sill steps and side handholds to provide safe access to the deck. Additional safety is provided by the extension of handholds above the deck: on one end, on both sides, and near a corner position. End sill handholds will not be applied as they would not be accessible because of the continuous deck.

The locomotives used to operate the Iron Highway train will be equipped with a freight/passenger 26-C automatic brake valve, which will be set in the passenger position with graduated release. This feature will greatly enhance train braking, with the braking positions being minimum application, service application, zone, and emergency. This system incorporates improvements superior to conventional freight brake equipment.

There is a KE-2 control valve on every fourth 30-foot platform and a vent valve on every other platform. The Iron Highway train will be equipped with a two-pipe system, having a control pipe (brake pipe) and a supply pipe (train-lined main reservoir) to provide an inexhaustible brake system, eliminating the use of emergency reservoirs. The

retarding forces are provided by compressed air, via a main reservoir pipe controlled by a pipe of 90 psi, cylinder pistons, brake rigging and with a brake shoe at each wheel location. However, this brake system does not include emergency brake cylinder pressure as specified in Title 49 CFR 232, Appendix B. Calculations indicate that stop distances for the Iron Highway train will be better than that of standard intermodal trains. Data will be recorded and provided from the actual stop distance tests which will be performed at the Pueblo Test Center.

Initial terminal train air brake tests on the Iron Highway will be performed in full compliance with 232.12. An initial terminal train air brake test will be performed once during each 24-hour period, consistent with the completion of a round trip by each train.

The petitioners request FRA's approval of the proposed use of the computer-controlled inspection system to perform intermediate type air brake tests when such tests are required by 232.13. It is proposed that these intermediate tests be performed from the locomotive cab utilizing the special equipment installed in the conventional locomotives to be used in the Iron Highway trains.

The locomotives dedicated to this Iron Highway service will each be equipped with two special purpose computers which will display on a monitor continuous information regarding the brake status of each platform (e.g., cylinder position (applied or released), indication of cylinder pressure and detection of stuck brakes. The computers will also monitor and display wheel bearing temperatures, indicate when the split-ramp platform is separated or secured, and will locate the occurrence and position of faults. This information will be sufficient to establish that during the applied test all brakes are applied, and during the release test that all brakes are released. The Iron Highway train air brake system is designed to provide constant monitoring of train brake activity. The engineer will have the benefit of much more information relative to the condition and functioning of the air brakes than has ever been available prior to this invention.

Additionally, the Iron Highway train has replaced the conventional handbrakes function of holding or retarding the train in the absence of any brake cylinder pressure, with spring applied, automatic parking brakes on the first five and last five platforms. The design of this brake ensures that it cannot be left applied inadvertently, thus avoiding dragging brakes. During

spring-brake operation, the brake shoe will be forced against the wheel tread surface at the force of approximately a 50 percent loaded car-full service value. This general type parking brake has been in service for several years and has been proven successful.

This waiver request is for a test operation of two interim version Iron Highway trains for a period of up to 3 years on specified rail lines, which lines may vary from time to time, subject to prior notice to FRA. The initial test requested is from Livonia, Michigan and East Chicago, Illinois. The final version of the Iron Highway train is expected to be available in the summer of 1996.

Interested parties are invited to participate in these proceedings by submitting written views, data, or comments. All communications concerning these proceedings should identify the appropriate docket number (e.g., FRA Docket Number PB-95-1 and SA-95-2) and must be submitted in triplicate to the Docket Clerk, Office of Chief Counsel, FRA, Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Communications received before *June 1, 1995* will be considered by FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable. All written communications concerning these proceedings are available for examination during regular business hours (9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.) in Room 8201, Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590.

The FRA has determined that a public hearing be held in this matter. Accordingly a public hearing is hereby set for 10:00 a.m. on May 25, 1995, in room number 6244, Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590.

The hearing will be an informal one and will be conducted in accordance with Rule 25 of the FRA Rules of Practice (Title 49 CFR Part 211.25), by a representative designated by the FRA. The hearing will be a nonadversary proceeding in which all interested parties will be given the opportunity to express their views regarding this waiver petition.

Issued in Washington, D.C. on April 25, 1995.

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*Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Compliance and Program Implementation.*  
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